

Staying Calm

Parenting is challenging, and staying calm can be hard for anyone. Remember that your toddler can sense when you're upset, and will learn how to handle stress by watching you. Learning to stay calm will be good for you and help your toddler develop in a healthy way.



DID YOU KNOW?

Staying calm as a parent or caregiver can be even harder if you grew up with a caregiver who had a temper or who was easily upset. Think about how your toddler's behaviour makes you feel and about how your parents and caregivers responded to you when you were little. This can help you understand your reactions and make it easier to stay calm and respond to your child in healthy ways.

What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

The possible effects – brain damage, blindness or even death – of shaking a young child, even for a few seconds.



DANGER

Never shake your toddler. If you're feeling overwhelmed and afraid you might hurt your child, put them in a safe place and get help immediately. Call a family member, a friend, a public health or primary care nurse, your health care provider or HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

What you can do:

- ✓ Stick to routines to help your toddler feel and act their best.
- ✓ Learn about what kinds of behaviour are typical at different ages. (See [Typical Child Development by Age](#))
- ✓ Get as much rest as you can.
- ✓ Eat well.
- ✓ Make time for yourself, even a moment here and there.
- ✓ Spend time outdoors.
- ✓ Accept that you may not always be able to soothe your child, and that letting them cry for a few minutes won't harm them.
- ✓ Talk with someone about your feelings, and to other parents and caregivers about your experiences.
- ✓ See the [Resources](#) section for services and supports.



HOW TO React if you feel you're losing control

1. Gently put your toddler down in a safe place, like the crib.
2. Leave the room for a few minutes.
3. Take some deep breaths and count to 10, repeat calming phrases to yourself, cry into a pillow or run on the spot. Or call a friend or relative to ask for help.
4. Wait until you're calm to try comforting your child again.



TRY THIS

No parent or caregiver stays calm all the time. If you lose your temper, apologize to your toddler. This will model the kind of behaviour you expect from them.



DID YOU KNOW?

Spanking is not a good option. It can hurt your toddler, cause them to be afraid of you and teach them that hitting others is okay.

